

**HERO
OF BROTHERLY LOVE**



**The Life of
Father
Engelmar Unzeitig**

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Father Englemar Unzeitig**

(died in Dachau March 2, 1945)

Translated from the German

Mariannahill Mission Society

P.O. Box 87

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Foreword

Maximilian Kolbe and Engelmar Unzeitig: much unites these two heroes of brotherly love from this century. Kolbe gave his life at Auschwitz so that someone else, a father of a family, could live. Unzeitig volunteered for service among the Russian prisoners in the quarantined barracks of Dachau shortly before the end of the war. He volunteered to go to those doomed to death, thereby condemning himself to death.

It fits for Father Engelmar Unzeitig's life what the jungle doctor Albert Schweizer wanted to display in his own life, i.e., "To leave behind a trace of love." Four of his six years as a priest Father Engelmar spent in the concentration camp. The numerous testimonies of his fellow prisoners prove to what degree life for the quiet and unassuming Mariannhiller was, in the final analysis, a service of others out of a spirit of service of God. His life, like that of his confrere Maximilian Kolbe, was a martyrdom of brotherly love.

The "episcopal process," i.e., the introduction of the process for the beatification and canonization of Father Engelmar Unzeitig, was officially opened by Paul-Werner Scheele, Bishop of Würzburg, Germany, on July 26, 1991. The opening session in Mariannhill's Pius X Seminary, Würzburg, was preceded by a religious service in



His parents' house (above) and the parish church in Greifendorf (below).



the crypt of Sacred Heart Church which was attended not only by the Mariannhill Missionaries, but also by the relatives of Father Engelmar and three former concentration camp comrades. When this process is completed in Würzburg, the documentation will be sealed and sent to the Holy See in Rome.

Childhood and School Years

Father Engelmar Hubert Unzeitig was a member of the German minority in the former Czechoslovakia. He was born on March 1, 1911, in Greifendorf, north of Brünn, Czechoslovakia. Hubert was the only brother among four sisters. His parents worked a modest farm there. After elementary school and one year as an apprentice farmer, there ripened in Hubert the desire to become a priest. He wrote to the Mariannhill Missionaries in Reimlingen, Germany, and was accepted there into the seminary for late vocations in 1928. He remained there for six years. After graduation he decided to join the Mariannhill Mission Congregation. After novitiate in Arcen, Holland, where he received the name of Frater Engelmar, he moved with his classmates to the Mariannhill Pius X Seminary in Würzburg. There he studied philosophy and theology for five years, made his final profession of vows in May 1938 and, after finish-

ing his studies, was ordained priest in Würzburg in the summer of 1939. As newly ordained priest he celebrated his First Mass in his home village of Greifendorf. While Father Engelmar was still at home, the Second World War broke out.

After his pastoral year Father Engelmar was transferred to the newly founded Austrian province of the Mariannhillers with headquarters in Riedegg, Austria.

Arrest in Glöckelberg

In Riedegg Father Engelmar was ordered to care for about thirty French prisoners of war. Although it was strictly forbidden, he celebrated Mass with them every Sunday. In the fall of 1940 the Bishop of Linz requested Mariannhill Fathers for pastoral work. Thus Father Engelmar took over the parish of Glöckelberg in the Bohemian Forest as parish administrator. There he lived, as one of his confreres described it, "like a hermit." Nevertheless, Father Engelmar took very seriously the task entrusted to him in spite of the spartan subsistence and the hard winter of 1940-1941. His concern for the parish community showed itself in numerous house calls, especially to the old and sick. His sermons and religion classes were conscientiously prepared. And it was in the school, too, where the young Mariannhill Father first ran into

trouble in the eyes of overzealous Hitler youth. The unequivocal answers which Father Engelmar gave to the insidious questions of the Hitler youth and the consistent presentation of the teaching of Christ went too far for some of the Nazi spies. Father Engelmar was reported. He was accused of "traitorous pronouncements," that is, "defense of the Jews."

On April 21, 1941, he was arrested in the Glöckelberg rectory by two Gestapo. Apparently he was too much of a disturbance for the Nazis. On the same day of his arrest he was brought to the prison in Linz on the Danube. Many of his confreres were convinced, as he was, that there must have been an error. But it was not so. After six weeks of fearful waiting, the directions from Berlin came for Father Engelmar: Dachau. Thus a very painful chapter of his young priestly life began. He was just thirty years old.

Into the Dachau Hell

"I came here to Dachau on June 3. Am well." With those two lapidary sentences Father Engelmar began his first letter from the concentration camp to his sister Maria, who later joined the Mariannhill Missionary Sisters as Sister Maria Huberta.

The admittance procedure for the concentration camp was already demeaning. The prisoners

were shaved of all hair on their whole body. Then they were brushed with a disinfectant, which stunk and burned the skin, and washed off again in the shower sometimes with ice cold water and sometimes with scalding hot water, as the SS decided. The prison clothes were too big or too small for most of the prisoners. A pair of wooden shoes, a metal bowl, silverware and a drinking cup were all



His ordination chalice (above) and himself as a seminarian (right). Father Engelmar was ordained priest on August 6, 1939.



the individual prisoner got. The psychological burden, the external humiliation, the continual shouting of the SS, the wearing of a number, the loss of all rights—these were the worst things for a prisoner at the beginning of his time in the concentration camp.

Father Engelmar's number in the concentration camp was 26147. He had to wear it on all articles of clothing. If he met an SS, he had to snap to attention, take off his cap and greet him. In addition, every prisoner's status was immediately known to the SS by the chevron sewn on his jacket and trousers. Almost all of the clergymen belonged to the political prisoners and wore a red triangle chevron on their clothes.

With work time stretching to twelve hours at times and interrupted by harassing roll calls and tortures, the food in the concentration camp was less than a miserable starvation diet. Many prisoners died after a few months of undernourishment and debilitation.

The threats, the terror, the fear, the crowded quarters, the poor clothing, the long hours of work in the rain, the continual commands in drill sergeant tone took a high toll on the nervous and physical strength of the prisoners.

First Letters from Prison

The prisoners were allowed to receive only

two letters a month from their families and to send them two. Every letter went through the camp censor. If anything suspicious was found in one, the letter was destroyed immediately. Not a word about camp life could be written. Besides the most important data about the prisoner (concentration camp number, etc.), the stereotyped sentence, "Everything is going well, I am in good health," always had to stand at the beginning of each letter. Whoever smuggled letters out of the camp was very severely punished, even with death.

In spite of this, Father Engelmar succeeded in getting several letters out of the camp through an SS man who came from his home village. There he mentioned the inhuman harassments and reported about the hard life in the camp, the miserable food and the attempted escapes with the subsequent severe punishments.

In their regular letters almost all of the prisoners used pseudonyms. Father Engelmar called himself "Walter" in many letters, especially when he wanted to say something about himself without making the censors suspicious.

In his first letters you can sense how much he cares about his relatives and his former parish of Glöckelberg. He is very concerned about maintaining a constant exchange of letters. His sister Maria-Huberta is his one contact with the outside world,

and only from her can Father Engelmar get news about his family and his confreres.

"You are all in good health. So am I, thank God. Because of our schedule, early to bed, early to rise, variation between food carrying, Holy Mass, meals, sleep, afternoon adoration, Divine Office, etc. time flies by fast. I am trying to use the time here as well as possible for my spiritual and religious progress. Not the last items on my program are prayer and reparation. I daily recommend all of you fervently to God at Holy Mass," Father Engelmar wrote on September 7, 1941.

Small but important bits of information about camp life, often cleverly packaged, are sprinkled in with other insignificant statements. Between remarks about the weather a word maybe about clothing or, along with statements about health, a couple of "grains" of information about prayer life in the camp—only in this way was it possible to get letters through the censors.

Priests' Barracks No. 26

Father Lenz, who was with Father Engelmar in Dachau and could later give detailed information about him to Mariannhill, once named Dachau the "largest monastery in the world." Almost 3000 clergymen at times lived together there in closest quarters.

Very soon the clergymen of all faiths were brought together in Barracks No. 26, 28 and 30. These three barracks, called "priests' barracks" for short, were off grounds for the other prisoners. In Barracks No. 26 a Mass could be celebrated every day. The chapel was a picture of misery: an altar of wood slats, a chalice made from a metal cup, a tabernacle of tin cans. Often the Mass was disturbed by ruthless SS men. Frequently Masses were also celebrated somewhere else on the camp grounds. The prisoners attended by standing around a flower bed or at the corner of a greenhouse. Only the Polish clergymen were forbidden to celebrate or attend Mass. German priests often brought sacred hosts to the Polish priests or other prisoners at the risk of their lives.

For Father Engelmar and many of his fellow prisoners the concentration camp was not only a path of suffering but also a school of prayer. Maurus Münch rightly believes that the special grace of those years was to have sought God more intensely in Dachau.

The daily schedule in the priests' barracks seemed rather "humane" for one year. Mass could be said and the breviary prayed, as Father Engelmar wrote. There was even a "library" with a few books. But soon the clergy were also put again into the work squads. Above all they had to carry

the mess kettles for all of the prisoners, the worst kind of slave labor. Full (with cabbage soup or tea), the iron kettles weighed about seventy-five kilograms (165 lbs.). Two weakened and thoroughly frozen priests had to carry on the run a kettle between them through snow and over icy paths amid blows and shouts from the SS.

Compulsory Service on the Plantation

Under these conditions even the clergymen were often near despair. It was hard to keep one's trust in God's love and kindness in such surroundings.

From April 1942 on, Father Engelmar worked on the so-called plantation, a piece of land which comprised many hundreds of acres for raising mostly spices and for experimental fields. This work was not classified as hard labor by the SS, but the reality was otherwise. Hundreds of the prisoners slid along on their knees pulling weeds and crawled around in irrigation channels which stunk like the plague, without any cover from wind and rain, driven on by Kapos (prison foremen) who often treated them like cattle. All this was done without breaks, often on the run and amid blows. In addition, there were the ever present hunger pangs in their stomach.

Hans Brantzen, who worked with Father

Engelmar on the plantation, expressed himself in very moving words about the Mariannhill: "I got acquainted with Unzeitig as co-worker in Greenhouse No. 6 of the infamous plantation. Those were terrible months in the heat, the rain and the snow. We had to push wheelbarrows, dig up beds, and we sat in transplant plots in rain and storm, Unzeitig and I often together. Without having to exaggerate, I can honestly say that he was always the same. When others complained and talked about the good old days back home, when it got too hard for them and they could not go on, he would look up to his Father. And it helped. The main traits of his fine character were modesty, calmness and amiability in the crowded quarters of the barracks. All this did not make him stand out. What did stand out was his charity when he would beg from confreres for other poor prisoners. When we came from hard work to our barracks to take our portion of turnips or something else, you could see him go into the chapel before he entered the mess hall. In the evening Unzeitig could always be seen for some minutes in the chapel. The same before roll call. With great heroism he kept on going through the 1942 death summer and hunger months, although he was so tired and exhausted that he was ready to collapse, like all of us. Through it all he remained the same helpful and quiet man."

Letters from the Years 1941-42

"What perhaps sometimes seems like misfortune is often the greatest good fortune. How much a person learns only through experience in the school of life! We should, it seems, feel and experience for others the lack of peace in the world and help them to true peace. Then we are not surprised if God takes some things out of our hands which were dear and precious to us." These amazing words Father Engelmar wrote in a letter of December 15, 1941.

On March 8, 1942, he wrote: "Glad that it's gradually getting warm and dry again. That will also help Walter [his pseudonym]. He is still young and healthy, and what his comrades on the front have to put up with he will be able to endure too. In addition, he has the wonderful example of Christ before his eyes."

Again on April 5, 1942: "How the devil stirs up storm and commotion repeatedly when in the time before Easter many souls are freed from his power, and how this battle and his rage increase at the time when Christ's way of the cross reached its high point! Walter could write a book about this." These are clear indications of the harassments he had to take in the concentration camp.

In the summer of 1942 a dangerous starvation broke out in the camp which carried off innum-



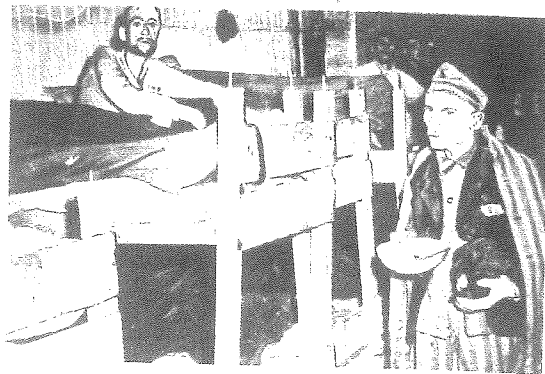
The concentration camp at Dachau today.

able prisoners to a miserable death. The battle over the little food led to terrible scenes everywhere in the camp. Father Engelmar wrote about this: "Yes, as Walter said recently, if there were not this hope, a person would go insane. Let us hope that there will still be a fairly good grain and fruit harvest, so that the threat of starvation can be averted again and God may again have mercy on those who are dependent on the will of others for every little piece of bread" (July 25, 1942). The coded news about his own hunger and discouragement cannot be missed.

Then he shows relief at the arrival of the first food package. (The camp directors allowed the sending of packages in the fall of 1942.) Father Engelmar writes: "I see that we are not forgotten here in exile."

Secret Pastoral Work Among the Russians and the Sick

Especially during the last years of his captivity Father Engelmar did much for the Russian prisoners in Dachau. Father Hans Brantzen says that Father Engelmar took up contact with the Russian prisoners especially in the Messerschmitt plant where he and other clergymen had to work. Brantzen writes: "Here at the Messerschmitt works we witnessed a special occurrence regarding Father Engelmar which above all brought out his willingness to help those who were searching in a religious sense. A Russian married man with children, Peter by name, had the job of introducing us to the basics of technology. Peter turned out to be a simple but profound and spiritually mature person. And so discussions about God soon began during the night at the Messerschmitt plant. They were Nicodemus conversations of a very peculiar sort. Father Engelmar always showed a special interest in this man who was seeking. The two often met to



talk at other times as well. To make himself better understood to Peter, Father Engelmar diligently studied Russian. But in Peter there always remained a final uncertainty, a final fear."

Brantzen writes that Father Engelmar's decision to volunteer as orderly in the sick barracks finally broke the ice in Peter so that he decided to convert to the Catholic Church. "The death of his missionary shook him terribly. He regarded Father Engelmar as a saint. He also had a so-called black letter [black bordered obituary sent through the mail—Transl.] sent to his relatives in which he praised Father Unzeitig as a holy priest who had brought Christ to him."

Father Joseph Witthaut wrote later in a letter to

Sister Adelhilde-Regina Unzeitig, a blood sister of Father Engelmar who had joined the Mariannahill Missionary Sisters [Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood of Shillington, Pa.—Transl.] already in 1937: “Hubert took up the study of the Russian language with much diligence. He seemed to be thinking of the possibility of once working there later as a missionary. In fact, the missionary vocation, I believe, determined all of his actions. He always seemed to be thinking of how he could help others; he always thought of himself last. When a package came from home, he always had acquaintances he had to help. Many confreres also knew that Hubert Unzeitig always knew where there was hunger to be stilled. Thus many a gift passed through his hands to civilian prisoners. He knew many of them because of his long time in prison. They then found help through him from the priests’ barracks No. 26.”

Much Quiet Heroism

A number of priests, including Father Engelmar, translated prayers from the Bible and passages from the *Imitation of Christ* into Russian. These tracts were read much, in secret of course. Hermann Dümig wrote about the Mariannahiller Father Engelmar and his concern for the Russian prisoners: “His zeal for souls knew no bounds. In



Mass in the chapel of Barracks 26.

the daily religion discussions all the doubts and worries of a Russian prisoner, an engineer in civilian life, disappeared so that he promised to put his civil marriage in order and start practicing the Christian faith again. Later, that is, towards the end when it was so terrible for the prisoners, Father Engelmar took over the position of a barracks room elder in order to be able to minister pastorally to his poor comrades.”

Only later did it come out that the Russian engineer mentioned by Dümig was a high party official. Father Engelmar must have made an unusually profound impression on this Communist.

Other eyewitnesses remember also an SS man on whom Father Engelmar left a similar deep impression. Kurt Habich, also a fellow prisoner with Father Engelmar in the priests' barracks, writes about the relationship with the Russian prisoners: "Once we priests were given no bread for fourteen days because we did something good. The Russian young men could not take that. They secretly brought us their bread."

The witnesses are in agreement about how much Father Engelmar concerned himself with the "missionizing" of these prisoners. In fact, much heroism was practiced here in secret, hidden from view by the loud activity of camp life.

Volunteer for the Typhus Barracks

During the last weeks of December 1944 the conditions in Dachau came more and more to a head. Within a few weeks a typhus epidemic encompassed the whole camp. Death raged terribly. The persons who had typhus were packed into certain barracks because the hospital could not hold them anymore. Abandoned to their disease without protection, the sick died like flies. Camp statistics show a daily death rate of more than a hundred persons. One barracks with 1600 men counted only four hundred a few weeks later. Within the barracks conditions were abominable.

The sick were lying in their own excrement in a state of delirium. They groaned, cried out, went out of their mind and rolled around during attacks. They were crawling with lice (the disease carriers!) and fleas and were lying on the bare bed boards.

Because of the imminent danger of death, practically no one wanted to take an orderly job in the infected barracks. Father Sales Hess remembers: "In this embarrassment the camp directors remembered the clergy. Whatever the camp directors had in mind, our confreres accepted. There were ten volunteers from Barracks No. 26 and ten from Barracks No. 28, all heroes in the truest sense of the word. After their arrival among the sick they developed a thriving pastoral activity. Everyone who wanted could go to confession and Communion, receive the Anointing of the Sick, and begin the long last walk quietly and with the comfort of the Last Sacraments."

Father Engelmar was one of those twenty Catholic priests. They were greeted "as envoys from heaven" in the infected barracks. Now Father Engelmar's greatest decision had been made: it was the voluntary walk into death. Here the similarity to Maximilian Kolbe is also the greatest. Thus the typhus barracks of Dachau became Father Engelmar's last parish.

"He Wanted to Help Many People Yet"

At the time when Father Engelmar volunteered for orderly service with the typhus victims, the need could not have been greater. Father Joseph Witthaut, who was a close friend of Father Engelmar, writes: "Every morning the bodies of the dead, mercifully half-covered by the snow, which were waiting to be transported away, were for us a terrible proof of what was going on in the infected barracks. As bunk bed neighbor to Father Engelmar, I know very definitely that he was aware of the gravity of his decision when he volunteered for orderly duty."

The picture which presented itself to the volunteers was a hell which beggars description. But the twenty priests realized that the appeal they had answered was God's will and they went to work. They swept the planks and bed boards as clean as they could and washed the filthy, sweaty and skeleton-thin bodies of the sick. Father Lenz wrote about Father Engelmar: "The corporal help which he gave was for him only the necessary condition and a fruit of his priestly love of neighbor. He gladly heard the confessions of his poor sheep and comforted them in his kind and quiet way in the misery of the camp. Hubert was a man who shunned no sacrifice. Father Engelmar sacrificed all his free time for his poor comrades from various nations.

He offered them much more than just his time and selfless concern. He gave them his whole priestly love. That was his goal while death reaped its terrible harvest.

"One day I was called to the window of the second barracks room. Our Hubert had knocked. He was jovial in spite of the deadly earnestness of the situation. His happiness in his priestly activity shown on his noble, fine-etched face. A few days later, about noon, he had me called to the window again. But this time his face shocked me. His eyes glistened with high fever and his sunken cheeks showed sharply defined red spots. He stood there a bit bent over. He had his prison jacket pulled up tight about him because he was shaking with fever chills. It was also winter, around the 20th of February 1945. His answer to my admonition about being careful was a friendly smile. He totally underestimated his dangerous condition and seemed not to realize that death already had an unbreakable hold on him. He still wanted to help many people and many were waiting for his help. But he never thought about himself."

"Love Doubles One's Strength"

Father Engelmar himself still wrote a few short letters during the last months of his life. Mail delivery had become difficult toward the end of the

war because of the increased air raids. In his last letter (to Sister Adelhilde-Regina Unzeitig) his "attitude of love" shown forth once more. He was probably already sick when he wrote but did not want to let his relatives know anything about it. This letter is, as it were, his will, his "testament."

"Love doubles one's strength, makes one inventive, renders one inwardly free and happy. It really 'has not entered into the heart of any man what God has prepared for those who love Him.'¹ Of course, they too are buffeted by the harsh reality of this world with all its haste and chase and tumultuous wishes and demands, with its dissension and hate like a biting frost, but the rays of the warming sun of the love of the all-good Father are stronger and will triumph. The Good is undying and victory must remain with God, even if it sometimes seems useless for us to spread love in the world. Nevertheless, one sees again and again that the human heart is attuned to love, and it cannot withstand its power in the long run, if only it really is founded on God and not on creatures. Let us continue to do and offer everything up that love and peace may soon reign again."

Father Engelmar's serious sickness now quickly got worse, so that he was moved to the hospital barracks on February 20. Diagnosis: typhus in

¹I Cor 2:9



an advanced stage. Even the care he got in the hospital could not stave off his death. According to his death certificate, the hour of death was on Friday, March 2, 1945, at 7:20 AM.

“Hero of Charity”

Thanks to Father Richard Schneider, Father Engelmar’s body was burned alone in the concentration camp crematory. Father Richard says: “I, like all my confreres, considered Father Engelmar as a saint. Because I esteemed him so highly, I tried at that time to get his ashes.”

Then in an adventure story of its own, Father Engelmar’s ashes, sewn into a small linen bag, could also be secretly smuggled out of Dachau. This bag reached the Mariannhillers in Würzburg and was buried there on Good Friday, March 30, 1945, in the Mariannhill vault.

In the fall of 1968 a simple shrine was put up in the Sacred Heart Church of the Mariannhill Missionaries in Würzburg. The ashes of Father Engelmar were transferred to the shrine on the afternoon of Prayer and Penance Day [a German national holiday—Transl.], November 20, 1968. Besides many of the faithful, there were present especially priests and Mariannhill missionaries who had spent time in concentration camps. We quote from the sermon preached by Reverend



The spot where Barracks 26 stood, the so-called priest’s barracks.

Doctor Sales Hess, O.S.B., on the occasion.

“We do not want to indite what has long since been brought to judgment and condemned. Nevertheless, justice requires that we priests from Dachau give testimony of a heroism which surpassed the ordinarily human, and Father Engelmar deserved that we honor his heroism with today’s celebration and place his ashes in this shrine. Father Engelmar was not just someone or other of the nearly three thousand clergymen of Dachau who gave their lives for Christ in a godless world. Father Engelmar was a hero of charity and a hero

of apostolic zeal."

After the transfer of the ashes on that day, one of the priests thought, "We should no longer pray *for* Father Engelmar, but *to* him."

Missionary of Truth, Grace, and Love

Sermon of the Reverend Doctor Paul-Werner Scheele, Bishop of Würzburg, Germany, at the memorial Mass for the fortieth anniversary of the death of Father Engelmar Unzeitig, C.M.M., on March 2, 1985 (printed with the permission of the Bishop).

Rev 21:1-7

Jn 12:23-28

Dear confreres in the priestly ministry,
Dear sisters and brothers in the Lord,

LAST WORDS

The last lines which Father Engelmar Unzeitig wrote in Dachau shortly before his death belong to the most precious gifts he left us. They are like a testament for us. They carry more weight than other beautifully phrased words. It is a weight given them by the total commitment of this priest. They are in line with the last words which we meet in today's liturgy. The gospel which we have just heard is the last public speech of the Lord accord-



The transferral in 1968 of the urn of Father Engelmar's ashes from the cemetery of Würzburg to the Mariannhill church in the same city. They are still located there today.

ing to the testimony of the Gospel of St. John. The epistle relates the last words of the Lord in the last book of Holy Scripture. The last words of the last letter of Father Engelmar from the concentration camp are like a forceful commentary on these words of the Lord. They can bring home to us and

make clear what the Lord wants to say. Father Engelmar is a missionary beyond his death. When he was ordained priest in this church on August 6, 1939, he surely was thinking of a different missionary engagement. The Lord decreed otherwise. He assigned to him an especially difficult and important missionary task. It is, I believe, still timely for the evangelization of our fatherland that has to a great extent become pagan. Father Engelmar is a missionary of truth, grace and love. We can gather this from his last letter.

Missionary Testimony

TRUTH

The truth which Father Engelmar left tells us, "We are safe in God's hands." Cautiously he alludes to the difficult conditions. It was not easy to be very specific in a letter that had to go through censorship. He indicated the situation only in a general way, as the prisoners had learned to do. Then he continues, and I quote: "All that does not rob us of our tranquility because we all feel safe in God's hand, as St. Paul says, 'Whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.'"

Dear fellow Christians, such a word in such a context, in the face of misery and death, of hatred and brutality, after the experience of human weak-



"To honor the dead, to warn the living."

nesses and inhuman depravity, in view of certain death, is anything but obvious. It is a truly non-conformist word, a courageous word, a word which grace alone can teach. To know oneself safe in God's hand, in spite of all and in all: that is communion with the Lord whose last words according to the testimony of the Gospel of St. Luke were, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Lk 23:46).

Father Engelmar pointed out the same wonderful truth with other words in two letters which he wrote earlier. In 1941, on the feast of Ss. Peter and Paul, he wrote: "We are all strengthened by the thought that, without the will of God, not even a single hair falls from our head and that all things work together for the good of those who love God, or at least strive to love Him." In all humility (he was a quiet and reserved man) he could say of himself that he strove to love Him. He relied on God who acts in a totally different manner from the way things appear and the way they were experienced there. He directs all things to the good. Two months later he jots down: "God guides everything with marvelous wisdom. We just don't always immediately know what it is good for." Here we sense the anguish behind those words, the admission that it is not always immediately evident, God only knows, what everything is good for, what meaning it all has.

Father Sales, who shared the misery there, wrote a moving account about those years entitled, "World without God" (Sales Hess, *Dachau—Welt ohne Gott*, Nürnberg 1946). That was the way it really looked in Dachau, and yet faith says, "This world, too, without God, built by men against God, is in God's hand. He sustains everything and knows how to turn everything to good." This is a truth that not only can comfort us. It is a truth that can change our life radically, uphold and form it, make it rich and fruitful.

GRACE

Another word of Father Engelmar in his last letter shows him as a missionary of grace. Our confrere writes: "All our actions, desires and talents: what are they but His grace which sustains and guides us? His all-powerful grace helps us to overcome difficulties. The Lord Himself, as St. Felicity says, suffers in us and together with our good will struggles for the triumph of His grace. Thus we can increase His honor if we do not impede His grace and surrender ourselves to His will without reserve."

We could, perhaps, summarize these sentences in the words "struggle for the triumph of His grace." Here too we should not miss the testimony of suffering, of participation in the passion of

Christ which is expressed restrainedly. His words deal with a misery which none of us is able to understand. By "none" I mean those who have not shared that fate. Among us are confreres who have suffered it. I take this opportunity to express to them my respect and my gratitude and to tell them that we will need their testimony also for the future. The rest of us have no idea what it means to speak of the triumph of His grace in such a situation. Father Engelmar did not speak of this triumph because he felt himself strong, more powerful than everything that was done to him. He points to the Lord and says, He Himself is suffering in us. He is in our midst. We also continue His Passion for the salvation of the world in this place. Because He is here and because the servant is where His master is, there can be a triumph of grace that is more powerful than anything that is against God. The Lord says, "Whoever wants to serve me must follow me, so that my servant will be with me where I am" (John 12:26). Our confrere followed this call of Christ. He knew that the Lord was with him and that he was celebrating the victory of grace. He knew that it is up to us to entrust ourselves totally to this Lord. That is what it really means to believe: not only to hold something to be true, but to abandon oneself to the Lord completely, body and soul, flesh and blood, at every moment. In a letter of

1943 Father Engelmar writes: "As to the rest, I leave everything to the mercy of God and simply seek to do His truly adorable will day by day, and hour by hour, as well as I can. The Lord is giving me in these days of Holy Week (that surely was not only true for the liturgical days) a most beautiful example in the words, 'Father, not mine but your will be done.' That is the straightest way to God."

Dear sisters and brothers, let us listen to what this credible witness has to say. Let us give ourselves and everything we have to the mercy of God, ready to do His will. We can be certain that the Lord celebrates the triumph of His grace also in this world of ours and in this hour of history.

LOVE

We should learn one last thing today. Our dear Father Unzeitig was a missionary of love. He writes of it in his last letter: "Love doubles one's strength and makes one inventive, internally free and happy. It really has not occurred to anyone what God has in store for those who love him." Dear sisters and brothers, in distress, when the worst thing one has to endure is perhaps the fact of not being free and when suffering increases, it is no less than a miracle, a miracle of grace, a miracle of love, to say that there is something which can make one internally free and happy. Father Unzeitig says,

Such is the way the love of God acts. He is a witness, a missionary, a martyr of love. He did not utter a few enthusiastic words in a beautiful and sentimental hour. He writes of what moves him and supports him; he has lived these words. His fellow inmates know that he was among those who were willing to help in need, willing to help even the poor. In the misery of Dachau, the Poles and the Russians certainly were the most ill-treated and despised. For them he ultimately sacrificed his life when he went to the typhoid barracks to work there as priest. He knows what he is talking about when he speaks of love. What makes his testimony not only credible, but also attractive, is that he speaks of it not all tensed up, but says that the Lord makes one free and happy. Two other letters written in the misery of the concentration camp show that these words not only were a gift of a special hour of grace, but tell of his conviction. In 1943 he writes, "One can really hardly express how good and sweet it is to serve God, to thank Him for everything, be it joy or sorrow, and to offer everything up." It is heroic, we must say, to give thanks for everything and offer everything up in that situation. Father Engelmar says: It is "good and sweet!" It gives joy! It makes happy! It makes one happy to be allowed to act like that! A year later he writes: One realizes again and again how "we receive so

much consolation and joy, as St. Paul said, 'I am overflowing with joy in all my tribulations.' Would that one could give the joy in God to all people, or make them seek joy according to the will of God. Let us continue to ask God that He may draw people to Himself and give them an understanding of true happiness with Him." Here shines through the word of the Lord which He spoke in His last discourse, "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself" (John 12:32). A love that brings this about truly creates internal freedom and happiness.

"BEHOLD I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW"

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ!

One of the most moving testimonies of Father Unzeitig is the little "scriptum" [notebook—Transl.] which he wrote for a Russian. With great effort he tried to learn Russian to be able to give simple person-to-person help and especially to be able to say what was important as a missionary. He wrote therefore in Russian what he wanted to bring home to someone for ever. It was especially words from the Psalms, words of the Lord. At the end he wrote, "Behold I make all things new" (Rev 21:5), the word in which the Lord sums up His whole love and, in this way, opens up the future for us, a future which we are to experience in union with Him in a

new heaven and a new earth. "Behold I make all things new" is the sum total of the truth, grace and love which Father Unzeitig in his way recommends to us.

Let us ask the Lord also to make us new that we may realize we and the world are safe in God's hand; that we may not shun the struggle for the triumph of His grace also in us; that we may become new in His love, internally free and happy!

A last word from his farewell letter shall also be our conclusion here: "Let us continue to do and offer up everything that love and peace may reign again soon." May God grant that many say with us in determination, in love, in joy and in freedom, in the strength of grace and under the guidance of God's hand, "Let us continue to do and offer up everything that love and peace may soon reign again." Amen.

Postscripts About Father Engelmar Unzeitig, C.M.M.

Father Clemente Pereira, S.J.:

"My place was directly behind Father Engelmar in the priests' barracks. It is somehow strange that I now see only him before me all the time. At that time the impression he made on me was of a simple, modest and deeply religious priest who did not say much, but certainly prayed much

instead. He was a saint! I don't use that word lightly. But for Father Engelmar it fits. He was a saintly priest!"

Father Eugene Weiler:

"His genuinely priestly figure stands before me very lifelike. I would be very happy were Father Engelmar Hubert Unzeitig raised to the altars, for the *advocatus diaboli* [the person commissioned to bring up objections during the canonization process—Transl.] would certainly be hard put to find anything to bring up against him."

Father Hermann Scheipers:

"Father Engelmar himself radiated something holy without words, without great stir. He was doubtlessly one of the most unobtrusive, loveable confreres in Dachau. I knew him well. But he was so modest that you can hardly remember anything to say about him."

Monsignor Emil Kiesel:

"Father Engelmar Hubert Unzeitig? He was a very dear, precious man. He was love in person. More than that I cannot say. That he was: love!"

Whoever receives favor through the intercession of Father Englemar is asked to report them to one of the following addresses:

Postulator General
Mariannahill Missionaries
Via S. Giovanni Eudes 91
00163 Rome, Italy

Postulator General
c/o Mariannahill Mission Society
23715 Ann Arbor Trail
Dearborn Heights, Michigan 48127

A booklet of a novena to Father Englemar is available from:

LEAVES Magazine
P.O. Box 87
Dearborn, MI 48121